

Written Testimony in Support of Bill 5491 – Film Tax Credit

Colin Theys

Representative Berger, Senator Fonfara, and distinguished members of the committee,

I'd like to contribute a few words in support of bill 5491. I'm a movie director and producer living in New Haven and working in the state. I've directed 8 feature films here, appearing on Lifetime, Chiller, Syfy, and others.

This legislation targets low-budget, home-grown productions and in turn, the in-state companies that create them. While not the most glamorous, this budget range is where job growth begins. If the state wants to be a player in the entertainment industry, we need to nurture and develop the workforce. Entry-level jobs are in low-budget filmmaking, not big-budget, high-profile Hollywood projects. Getting young local talent to stay and begin a career here is vital to the long-term industry in the state. I would present myself as an example.

I graduated from Wesleyan University in 2007 with a degree in film studies and an ambition to direct. At the time, I assumed that I would be living in Los Angeles or New York by the end of the year. Instead, I was hired by a local production company, Synthetic Cinema, to direct a very low budget monster movie. At the time, Connecticut had just implemented its tax credit for film production and that made the production viable. After that, I stayed with SCI, directing and producing exclusively in state for the last 8 years. I'm now a resident and home-owner and we bring work to state.

Unfortunately, in today's landscape, it is simply not a sensible decision to mount a production in a state with little film infrastructure no tax incentives. In both New York and Massachusetts, there are both credits and the workforce to support them. If Connecticut wants to keep young people in state to build that base, it needs to become competitive not just for the big media companies, but for the new ventures that will produce the successes of tomorrow. These changes to the tax credit promote Connecticut filmmakers to hire Connecticut residents to make movies here in Connecticut.

Sincerely,

Colin Theys